NEAL ADAMS—NOW!

#91

AN EXCLUSIVE AND WELL-ILLUSTRATED INTERVIEW WITH THE ACCLAIMED ARTIST TURNED PUBLISHER OF CONTINUITY COMICS! UP-TO-THE-MINUTE OBSERVATIONS & CANDID OPINIONS ON COMICS, HIS ART & PLANS — PAST, PRESENT AND YET TO COME!

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

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recycled paper

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cover art by:
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UP FRONT

TROVE OF RARE ISSUES THANKS TO MILE HIGH

Thanks to a recent bulk purchase from Mile High — where we were fortunate to locate and latch onto some long out-of-print warehouse copies of COMICS INTERVIEW — we are proud to be able to restore our stock and once more offer a near full complement of original INTERVIEW back issues to fill the demand from all you completists and enthusiasts out there.

Not only that, but the re-stocking also results in more good news: We've actually been able to *lower* the prices on some of the scarce and sought-after issues, such as the original first printings of #6, #31 and # 65, among quite a few others. So making rare or sold-out issues available again not only unclutters the gallery of COMICS INTERVIEW covers by removing those annoying "sold out" banners — but also makes ordering classic collector's item issues a lot easier on your wallet, as well.

There is a true wealth of vast and diverse comics knowledge of all kinds there to be mined, so for those of you who we've had to deny specific issues in the past — now's your chance. Get 'em while we've got 'em! And for those who may be recent converts to COMICS INTERVIEW — now's the best time in years to find *all* your favorites among the back issues!

But we have only a dozen copies or less on many of our most desirable issues, so if there are certain interviews you'd really like to read, please order now, while it's on your mind — before we run out again! While we're doing our darnedest to keep each and every issue of INTERVIEW available, it's obvious that may not be possible for very much longer.

And thanks to all of you who've helped prove my editorial point (in issue #24) about limited circulation magazines such as COMICS INTERVIEW — loaded with cover art, photos and illustrations unseen in the mega-circulation comics mainstream — being the *true* collector's items in times to come.

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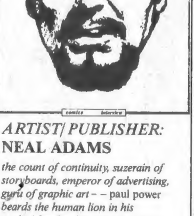

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NEAL ADAMS
the count of continuity, suzerain of storyboards, emperor of advertising, guru of graphic art — paul power *beards the human lion in his studio/den for this exclusive book-length interview*
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"What you want is your publisher to get rich."

THE FLY ©1960 Archie Comics / Rocketeer ©1991 Dave Stevens / Toybox, Mr. Mystic, Shaman, Crazyman, Titan and King Tut ©1991 Neal Adams / Batman, Deadman, Green Lantern, Green Arrow, Superman, Wonder Woman, Joker, Lex Luthor, Captain Marvel and Adam Strange ©1991 DC Comics / STAR TREK ©1991 Paramount Pictures / Conan ©1991 Conan Properties / X-MEN, Angel, Beast, Captain America and Gabriel ©1991 M.E.G.

"I'm working on the ROCKETEER movie."

NEAL ADAMS

I met Neal Adams through Continuity Studios artist Del Barras — who was inking my comic book EAST MEETS WEST #3 — to talk about Continuity's possibly publishing my series. Our first meeting went so well that I suggested this interview to get an insider's point of view on what's going on with Continuity Comics — as well as some reflections on Neal's work in the late '50s for Joe Simon on THE FLY and with the late, great Lou Fine.

Recently, Mike Royer at Disney gave Neal's studio the job of illustrating 50 color promotional storyboards for THE ROCKETEER movie and Neal asked if I'd like to work on the job. I said yes! So I took some time off SINGLES, the Warner film I was storyboarding for director Cameron (FAST TIMES) Crowe, to get some insight on how Continuity's Burbank studio ticks.

I haven't had that much fun in an art studio situation since I worked with Dave Stevens (who was creating THE ROCKETEER at the time), Russ Heath, the late Mike Sekowsky, and Jaroen (Aussie) Dawson at Hanna-Barbera in 1974! Now I respectfully re-introduce you to comics' finest draughtsman — Neal Adams! He and Continuity Publishing are back!

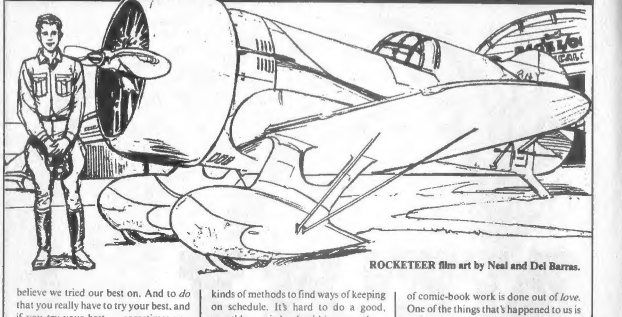
PAUL POWER: *Neal, what are you working on at the moment?*

NEAL ADAMS: I'm working on presentation frames for the Walt Disney Corporation for the ROCKETEER movie, that will be used to sell the licensing for THE ROCKETEER.

PAUL: *What I want to talk about, apart from the frames that you're doing on THE ROCKETEER, is Continuity Publishing. With Continuity, for a few years there, the books would only come out every once in a while, and now it seems they're coming out at least two a month. Can you give us a brief history of Continuity?*

NEAL: Well, as you know, there are *no* other publishers besides DC and Marvel Comics — everybody else is what they call an "alternate publisher." I don't quite know what an "alternate publisher" is, but apparently it's anybody that's not DC or Marvel. When we started *our* comic-book company, we decided to be not an "alternate publisher," but to try to compete with DC and Marvel in the style and type of comic-books that we did. The problem was — actually, the problem is — *me! (Laughter.)* The problem *is* that we really don't want to turn out a bad comic book. That is, we don't want to turn out a comic book that we don't

"We've got Texeira, Golden, Eeden, Grindberg . . ."



ROCKETEER film art by Neal and Del Barras.

believe we tried our best on. And to *do* that you really have to try your best, and if you try your best — sometimes you don't turn out a comic book very often.

So, we were making our best efforts to turn out *good* comic books, but we weren't making our best efforts to turn out *monthly* comic books. Now we've switched our emphasis to making our best efforts to turning out monthly comic books within that framework. Although we still want to turn out the best comic books we can, we've let that take second and we've allowed that turning them out on a *regular* basis is more important than turning out the *best possible* comic book, given that in an individual situation you *can* expect each artist to turn out the best possible comic book anyway. What you can expect is that for that given amount of time they will at least *try* to turn out the best comic that they can *within* that time.

So, we've switched our emphasis. That doesn't mean that we're going to be turning out *worse* comic books; I believe that it will probably mean that we will be turning out *better* comic books, because they will be more *in* continuity, you will be able to get them more often and you will be able to follow the story a little bit easier than once every six months. And by getting more people involved — which has basically been the way that we've had to do this, calling upon the talents of more people, which also means a greater investment in *money* — we're able to *switch* people. In other words, we'll get an artist to do two issues of a book while another artist will do two issues; and they will work on them at the same time. We're coming up with all kinds of methods to find ways of keeping on schedule. It's hard to do a good, monthly comic book within a month.

PAUL: *I've noticed in the couple of days that I've been working here on this ROCKETEER job that if you have down time in your studio, whether it be here or in New York, you have the artists fill in time by doing comic-book assignments.*

NEAL: Well, it's sort of a special situation; in fact, those people who *are* employed here and who *do* comic-book work get paid for that separately. They're actually making money on our down time, which is not so great for Continuity but it presses the obligation to Continuity to provide them with work for a full eight-hour day. If we *don't* provide that, then we can't say they can't do some freelance work during that down time — so we try to provide that freelance work from Continuity Publishing, so we have a little bit more control over it and we're able to turn out more comics.

PAUL: *It's better for the artists and it's better for you if they keep on working in one place?*

NEAL: Exactly. Most people who are working *at* Continuity aren't turning out as many pages as we would like, because unfortunately you really can make more money doing commercial art than you can doing comic books. So, it's a difficult thing to *realize*, that we can treat our artists better and give them a more profitable situation by having them do advertising art than to do comic books —

PAUL: *It's a nice counterbalance.*

NEAL: It is, but in a way it's kind of a *sacrifice* to do comic books. I think a lot of comic-book work is done out of *love*. One of the things that's happened to us is that we've discovered, in spite of a lot of *negative* press that we've gotten, that we've also gotten a lot of sympathy from people because we're maintaining, or at least trying to maintain, a quality outlook. People like **Dan Barry** and **Stan Drake** and various folks who seem to want to do good comic books will, in the end, turn out two or three good comics for us without thinking that they're sacrificing anything. Certainly, our *rates* are equal to DC's and Marvel's rates, so the potential for making money at Continuity is just as good.

There also seems to be an attraction to certain of our characters by certain artists out there. They like the characters, they like knowing that the stuff is going to get colored well, that it's going to get reproduced well — it's kind of a nice feeling. In the short time that we've been around, if you start knocking off the artists we've used, you've got a pretty good cream of the crop! We may not have gotten all of the artists working on X-MEN today, but outside of that we've really gotten everybody. We've gotten **Mark Texeira, Michael Golden, Trevor Von Eeden** —

PAUL: *Nestor Redondo.*

NEAL: **Stan Drake, Dan Barry, Mark Texeira** painted a comic book for us; painted a comic perhaps against the good wishes and the good judgment of *myself*, but he wanted to do it, so we allowed that he could do it. All that stuff is good. We're talking about good artists doing good stuff. I'm not naming them all, my memory is not very good on this . . . **Tom Grindberg, Mark**

"There's a flavor in the air, th[illegible]t this is not

Beachum, fabulous!

PAUL: *Known for his bikini stuff.*

NEAL: Oh, yeah, "up the rear" shots. It was really hard to control **Beachum** because he does tend to do that sort of thing. We tried to put it in a controlled atmosphere where it wouldn't become offensive to people, and in fact if you really analyze it, it's *not* offensive. It just seems offensive, but nothing is exposed.

In fact SAMUREE, which he drew for 3½ issues — which is the most that I've ever seen him on *anything* — the character Samuree is probably the smallest-breasted woman in comics. She's got the most athletic body; it's very slim, very trim, no extra weight on her body at all, and for those people who like athletic girls she's very attractive. And the way Mark draws her has, in my opinion, set a new standard for female superheroes. No longer do we necessarily *have* to see these large-breasted women.

PAUL: *I like her that way, myself.*

NEAL: I suppose that some people do. *(Laughter.)* It's just a little hard to imagine those girls being quite as active as they are — I mean, you don't find too many large-breasted dancers, for example. But also there's a flavor in the air, a flavor in the country I believe, and a flavor in the world, that says that this is not a necessity, to have large breasts to be a heroine or to be worthwhile or to be good as a female human being. And we think that Samuree presents a style of woman that really is *admirable* in her way.

That's what we try to do with all of the characters. If you start to analyze each book that we do, you discover that each one is aimed at a different point of view, and that it's not just doing superheroes. For example, MEGALITH — if I may indulge myself here — I believe that there is a very strong health accent in this country, and in the world, and . . . people have put down bodybuilding, there's a lot of bad rapping of body building, and I don't think it's a correct rap. And I don't like the idea that somehow by pressing a magic button or by drinking a formula or by being born on another planet that somebody should automatically be born with muscles. Anybody who has got any, knows that muscles are *earned*, they're not given.

PAUL: *It's work!*

NEAL: It's work, it's hard work. And Megalith represents that. He doesn't just represent a good healthy attitude about himself and about the world, he also represents a good healthy attitude about his body.

PAUL: *It's like a super-athlete. They tried to have a go at things like that in the past, but not quite the same thing.*

NEAL: Right. We haven't tried to make a body builder out of Megalith, we've tried to use his body building to make a *person* out of him — that's the accent that I like to take. If I were to make a statement that represents body building, I would say that the most important thing about body building is that body building makes a better *person*. It's not that the person makes better body building, or that it's an end in itself — although for some people who compete it does seem to be something of an end — it's that it really does improve the person.

PAUL: *It's the discipline, and it's also the feeling that you get from doing something and getting that reward that comes*

a necessity, to have large breasts to be a heroine."

Cover illustration from Neal's THE NEW HEROES portfolio showcasing TOYBOY, TITAN, MS. MYSTIC, SHAMAN, CRAZYMAN and KING TUT.

"I believe in the things that I believe in."

From the 1972 "Detroit Triple Fan Fair" comic convention program booklet.

with time.

NEAL: Right.

PAUL: *A means to an end.*

NEAL: And I think that's the attraction of Megalith, in that he *does* that, in that he presents that point of view. He's a totally unique character. He's nothing like any of the other characters that we do or anybody *else* does. It may not be that he comes from a different planet, but he does have something that you can look on and say, "This is something that's interesting."

PAUL: *He happens to be my favorite of all the Continuity characters.*

NEAL: In some ways he's *my* favorite, too, because he also represents . . . he comes from the Midwest, he was raised on a farm, he has a good attitude about America, he has a good attitude about himself, and he's not interested in listening to what other people's negative points of view are. He may not seem like the brightest guy in the world to people, but he's thought all the processes out that everybody else thinks out and then they get cynical, but he's not cynical!

PAUL: *What I like, you throw Megalith into the situations where it's like betrayal, betraying the country on all these different levels, and yet he's still pure to his values.*

NEAL: Right.

PAUL: *And it doesn't seem contrived.*

NEAL: No. There are people who are *like* that, strange as it may seem. I think that I'm like that a lot. I believe in the things that I believe in, I like them and I think they're good, and I don't care what anybody else thinks.

Armor and Silver Streak are a totally different situation. They are *manufactured*, in effect, by aliens, taken from a place on Earth and turned into something, and yet they rise to whatever it is that they have been turned into, and although they *become* that, they are dealt a terrible blow in that eventually they come back to their home planet and it's sort of like having become a slave. You become a slave and then suddenly you're set free, but you have all the *habits* of being a slave! You have all these things that are ingrained into you and, even though you have been a slave for a short time, they affect the rest of your life.

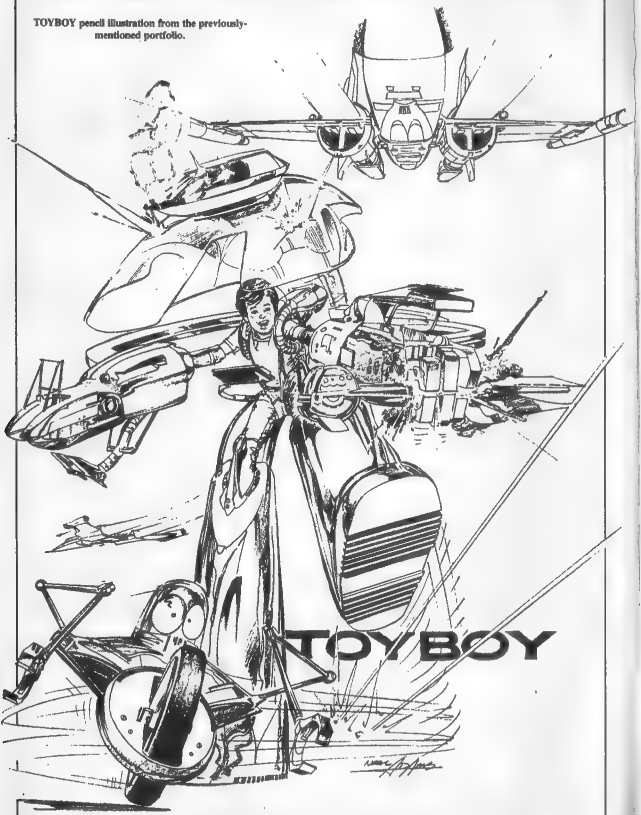
Now these two teenagers have to deal with what's happened to them. It's enough that all of this terrible stuff has happened to them, but in a way the real crisis — from the books that people have seen so far — hasn't really arisen. The real crisis is not "how do you get away from this situation, how do you deal with this intergalactic piracy situation" — because, in a way, it's one grand adventure — but what do you do when you get back and you have to go to school? *(Laughter.)*

PAUL: *In a sense I can relate to that. Living here, being away from Australia for twelve years, then going back home,*

ARMOR
FOR YOU TO LIVE, I MUST DIE!... BUT ARMOR WILL NOT DIE!

"Toyboy is very different from your standard superhero.

TOYBOY pencil illustration from the previously-mentioned portfolio.



He is perhaps one of the luckiest kids in the world."

you've become Americanized without even knowing it and you're like a stranger in your home town. It's very very weird! I feel that this comes through in the characters.

NEAL: Yeah.

PAUL: *I'm not even sure if they quite know it yet —*

NEAL: No, and they *can't* because they're *young*. It's all going to come as a terrible terrible shock to them. So that's, once again, totally different. These aren't two kids that somebody came down and said, "Bing! you have super powers." They *took* them. They destroyed their life, they destroyed their family, they took them off into space with the possibility that they might never come back and would be sold into slavery somewhere, and they had their hands chopped off — just terrible things happened to them! And yet they seem to be surviving, and in the end they want to come back. In whatever condition they happen to be in, they want to get back. So it's a totally different approach, in a way, to a superhero. People may not perceive it that way, but I think time will bear it out and people will see that.

TOYBOY is another example. Toyboy is very very different from your standard superhero. He would never be whatever he is if something strange hadn't happened to his father. He is perhaps one of the luckiest kids in the world in that he's the son of the richest man in the world and he's got all this stuff to play with, but suddenly his toys have to become weapons because something's happened to his dad. The greatest fear that you could have as a kid is that your dad's gone off and become a criminal, or gone off the deep end into and turned into something very strange.

PAUL: *Sure, sure.*

NEAL: And then what do you do? Do you fight your own father? Here is a kid who has to deal with this situation, very very unique. And there seems to be an attraction here; somehow we've touched on some kind of a universal thing about a son's relationship to his father, and the potential of what that could lead to. We've found that Toyboy leads to perhaps the most imaginative possible stories. We're doing all kinds of things with Toyboy, going into computers and other dimensions — very strange kinds of stories.

PAUL: *And the kid's still a kid, that's what I like.*

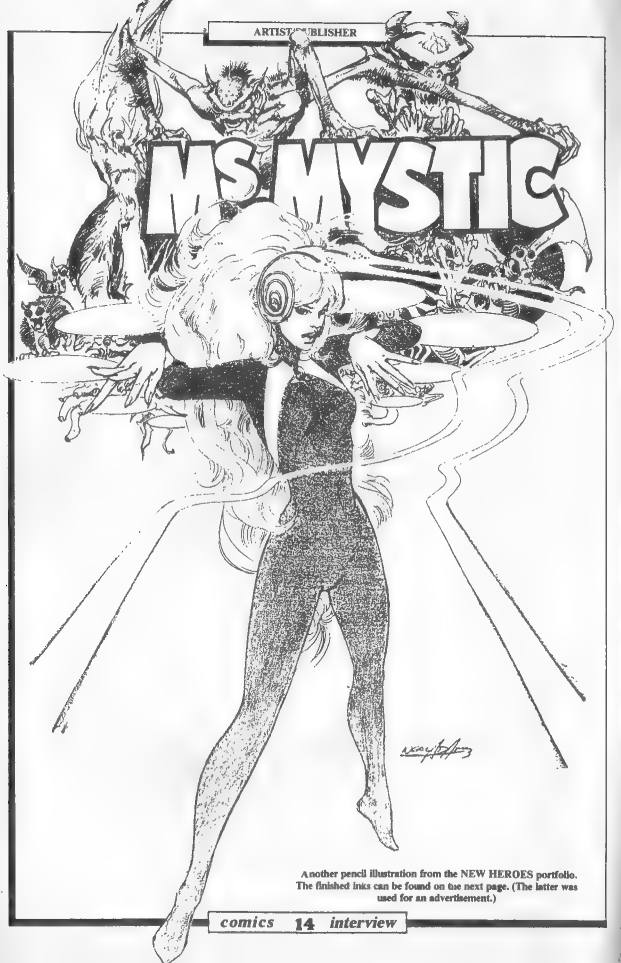
NEAL: The kid's still a kid, that's right. He doesn't change. He doesn't love his father any less, he doesn't love the mother that died apparently any less — he's just trying to deal with it. Whatever it is, he's dealing with it.

PAUL: *So, all these characters, they're all going to cross paths eventually?*

NEAL: They'll cross paths because we're in the comic-book business and we want to explore all of the possibilities. In the first issue Toyboy met Megalith. Suddenly, there was Megalith — "Whoa, man, who is this guy with muscles!" We'll experiment with *all* of these things. One of the things we *will* do is try to keep the characters pretty much the same as when they start out for a good long time, because they're all worthy of exploring. They're all interesting. We've got a new character coming out called Cyberrad –

PAUL: *This is the one that's more influenced by Japanese comics?*

NEAL: Yes. I've been . . . I can't say that I've been a *fan* of Japanese comic books. I suppose there are fans of Japanese comic books, and perhaps my head does not allude to that total Japanese comic-book fandom, but as an artist I recognize certain qualities in Japanese comic books that we don't have in American comic books. We don't like the rubber



Another pencil illustration from the NEW HEROES portfolio. The finished inks can be found on the next page. (The latter was used for an advertisement.)

Is Neal a workaholic? "I don't think so."

mouths that they draw in Japanese comic books, and we don't like some of the big eye quality, and we don't like the over acting quality of some of the characters. On the other hand, we *like* the very direct pacing of the story where whatever is happening is happening, and in the next panel something else is happening.

In American comic books you have a clutter of superheroes standing around in a room, five different things can be going on at once and you don't know where to look, and the next panel is the same sort of thing — it's just a *jumble* of things. In Japanese comic books they seem to hit the moment: somebody is angry, somebody is hitting, somebody is crying, somebody is flying, somebody is fighting, somebody is dying; very direct kind of exposition. We don't do that in American comics as much as we might, as much as we ought. One of the people that's doing it right now at Marvel is . . . oh, the guy who's doing SPIDER-MAN.

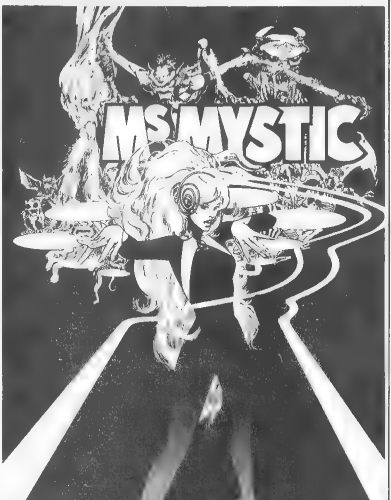
PAUL: *Todd McFarlane*

NEAL: Todd McFarlane. For whatever somebody might think of some of the stylistic things that he does, he has a very direct narrative and you *stay* with him panel to panel, and the thing just clips along very much like a Japanese comic book. There are values there that I think are important.

Another thing the Japanese comic books do, strangely enough that perhaps people look upon it as a negative thing, is that they break a story into more elements so that it takes longer to tell the story.

PAUL: *Well, they're like phone books.*

NEAL: Yeah. But at the same time the intensity of that story doesn't diminish even though they take longer to tell it, because they focus in each panel on the dynamics of what's going on. Once again, to compare that to an American comic book, you will have two or three superheroes in a panel fighting bad guys and it will seem like you have to examine that panel over on the left, over on the right, down below, and then you have to read this copy, then you have to refer to the caption — it's like a *puzzle* that you have to figure out. You're willing to do it because you're a comic-book reader, but at the same time it doesn't move you along very quickly. That's a way of getting a lot of information taken care of, whether you're doing it through dialogue or picture. In a Japanese comic book that same panel might take five pages to tell, because they focus on each bit of action.



PAUL: *I've seen some and it's almost like film storyboarding.*

NEAL: Yes. Well, one of the things that recommends the Japanese style of story-telling is that it *is* closer to film, and people *do* get to see a lot of film. Sometimes we just clutter up a comic book with *stuff* that we should really spread out and look at on an individual basis. That doesn't mean that everybody should do it, that all comic books should look like that, but I think CYBERRAD is a good experiment in that direction.

PAUL: *So, when do you see that coming out?*

NEAL: I don't know exactly because I've allowed that that responsibility should *not* be in my hands because I have too many other things to do, and I would do it too inefficiently. *(Laughter.)*

PAUL: *From what I've seen you doing here — the video section, the animatics, your regular commercial jobs, the storyboards — you're a pretty busy guy, Neal.*

NEAL: A pretty busy guy. It's hard to believe —

PAUL: *Would you call yourself a workaholic?*

NEAL: I don't think so, but I guess other people would, so since their opinions are

"My life is filled one end to the other with things I enjoy."

more important than mine we'll let them carry.

PAUL: *Now, you don't close yourself off and just do the work?*

NEAL: Well, there are people who do seem to me to be workaholics, and so by comparison I don't think that I'm a workaholic. But I do do things fairly intensely, and I *enjoy* things a whole lot. My life is filled from one end to the other with things that I enjoy.

PAUL: *And you've got your family here, they all seem to be into it.*

NEAL: Yeah, right

PAUL: *What I've liked about being here for these couple of days is to find out what makes you tick. What is this family business? You've got your ex-wife working for you back East — that alone must be great, to still have a good working relationship.*

NEAL: She's a wonderful and talented person and I care about her a lot. If I could provide a place for her to be eight hours a day that's better than any other place that she should be, then that's what I want to do. When you see that name Cory you realize that that's my ex-wife and also the mother of my kids - four out of five of my kids — and realize that this is a very close situation and the reason that stuff is good is that we all care about it. I don't see any bad vibes coming out of that

PAUL: *Oh, no no, what I'm saying is it's great! For whatever reason a relationship ends, the caring shouldn't.*

NEAL: No, it shouldn't.

PAUL: *What I've found is that this is a family business. Joel seems pretty happy doing what he's doing.*

NEAL: Joel's very talented

PAUL: *Zeea's doing her work.*

NEAL: All of my kids shine in different areas.

PAUL: *Your wife Marilyn's representing and producing. It's a happening place.*

NEAL: Oh, yeah. My oldest daughter Kristine is my associate publisher, she is the one that will, in the end, be responsible for the success or failure of my publishing company. And she was always afraid to draw when she was younger, but she's not afraid to represent and to use her personality and her intelligence to do business.

PAUL: *All your kids do draw, though?*

NEAL: Not at all. Joel draws, he's quite good. Jason draws and he's quite good. Zeea, my youngest daughter, has ability but she is not interested in drawing, and so draws the least. It's very difficult for kids to grow up in a family where you have an artist that seems to get a lot of admiration from other people, because then if you want to do it yourself you're always compared to that person. I've tried to present a point of view on my family that challenges my kids as much as possible, tries to make them strive and conflict with whatever is around them, *including* me, so that they can find their way through it. Joel is interested in computer graphics, he's interested in writing and directing, and he's also a pretty good artist. I would say he has the potential of being an excellent artist, but I don't think he really wants to do that. He might do it here and there. Jason has moved toward three-dimensional art, and he's become very very good at doing it. I don't know what his career, in the end, will be. He's graduated Visual Arts and he's done an incredibly good portfolio. Zeea seems to be interested in repping and acting — a very very strong interest in acting

PAUL: *Has she done some plays and such?*

NEAL: She was in my movie, and she's done bit parts in some other small films, and goes to acting class like any young

BEN CASEY
I WAS SUMMONED BY MR. BENCROFT, DR. CASEY. I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
OF COURSE, DR. ARLINGHOFF. I CAN ONLY HOPE YOU VIEW HARD PERSONNEL CASES AS A PERSONAL PROBLEM.
I WILL BE GLAD TO STATE MY VIEWS, DOCTOR.
YOU'D BETTER HURRY ALONG, ERIC. IT'S NOT DR. ARLINGHOFF TO HAVE A HEART ATTACK OVER A HARD PERSONNEL CASE.
BENCROFT, THIS IS A HOSPITAL, YOUR LOUD VOICES ARE IN POOR TASTE!
HMM... AIN'T LIKE THIS OLD!
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU COMING DOWN AGAINST TREATMENT I SUGGEST.
BENCROFT, GO IN THERE AND WAIT UNTIL I AM READY TO TALK TO YOU!
TELL HIM COWARDS DOCTOR! TELL HIM VERY WELL, TAKE CHEER!
I CONSIDER COMPLETELY INTIMIDATING ANYONE WHO IS NEEDED SURGERY IMMEDIATELY...
AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT BENCROFT.
HE IS OUT OF HIS ELEMENT AND I SHALL ENJOY TELLING HIM SO!
THANK YOU, DR. ARLINGHOFF AND SO YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO, I'LL REMEMBER THIS A TRIUMPH OF MEDICINE OVER RIDICULOUS!
LOVELY AFTERNOON. WE SHOULD BE OUTSIDE, ERIC. IT IS AN GOOD HARDER, BENCROFT!
BELIEVE ME, SOMETIMES I WILL NEVER WORRY ABOUT THEM!

"The mill I've been through has been intense, personal."

actress now, when she's in New York. And she does repping, and her personality comes through very very much in repping; a very pleasant personality. I don't know what will happen with her. They are different from the way I was, because whatever was driving me is different from whatever is driving them. It's like a big experiment to see what's going to happen; I don't know what it will be.

PAUL: *Right now it seems like a very nice, tight, very comfortable —*

NEAL: Yeah.

PAUL: *— working atmosphere.*

NEAL: It's tight and loose at the same time.

PAUL: *I must admit, when I first was working on your rough layout on the ROCKETEER thing, I was quite intimidated. I thought I was over that 'cause I don't feel that way when I work with directors*

NEAL: I understand that, not because I really understand it but because I've heard it so many times. I've had to understand it. It's true that I really have a passion for drawing, but also I have a passion for interpreting in pictures, whether it's film or whatever, action. I don't feel that my limitation is comics, I feel that my limitation is graphics in whatever form they come in. I hope to be able to do a film or two before long that will allow me to experiment and screw around in film.

But . . . I know that this stuff is intimidating to people because *I've* been through a lot of very very strange heads in *my* lifetime that seem to have broken new ground for me. Not new ground, but in this area of shapes and design, using shapes and those kinds of things to tell stories. The mill that I've been through has been a very intense personal mill, and apparently people, when they run into it and they see it, they start to see values in it. And when they gloss over it too quickly and then they turn around and look at it they see values that they missed. So it does become intimidating for those reasons.

PAUL: *Well, if we're talking about, like, the design of a page, breaking the six-panel standard Jack Kirby layout, they played around but not quite as much. And then your work kind of blew everybody out. I was aware of your work back in '63 or '64 when you were doing BEN CASEY, and then there was a gap and then I saw the stuff you did for DC in '66 on some war comics. Quite radical.*

NEAL: I was fortunate enough to get a syndicated strip when I was very young,

ROCKETEER
sketch by Neal.

"People think that there were certain formulas that I

and what happened in that syndicated strip happened because I was *bored* with the strip as a comic-strip artist. A comic strip was traditionally the culmination of a career, and for me it was the *beginning* of a career, and I was bored. I would pick up the newspapers every day and I would see whether or not I did a better daily than everybody else in the business, just because I was randy! I realized that the other artists didn't do that, they weren't interested in beating me; I was just interested in beating them. So every day I would pick up the paper and see if I had beat everybody! And very often I did, and it gave me a kick to do it.

At the same time, I was constrained by the comic-strip format. Not that that was the only work that I was doing — I was also doing advertising work and I was doing finished illustrations, black-and-white for newspapers and things like that, and I would do an interesting project here and there because I was very very active — but doing those three panels and doing a Sunday page is a very constraining format. You do three panels in a daily and you *have* to tell a story —so it was finding all kinds of ways within those three panels to do design and concept and a lot of things that are just too boring and long-winded to explain.

PAUL: *Well, the famous Sunday page that you did, Ben Casey's head or something?*

NEAL: Right. I did a Ben Casey head that appeared in *one* format as a Ben Casey head, but when you broke it apart to its *original* format, it totally disappeared. You would have to buy a tabloid-size paper and a normal-size paper and look at the two strips at the same time to see what had happened. The head came together only in one format — but I had to design it in the *other* format!

When I got to do comic books it was like being let free! "The candy store is open, let's just go in there and play!" I had pages to deal with. Six panels, nine panels, three panels, one panel — whatever I wanted to do, I was cut free to do it. So, all of the experimentation I had done in this very constricting form I was now *released* to do

One of the approaches I took, but I didn't take it *consistently* . . . I always try to find something in whatever it is that I do that challenges different levels of thinking beyond just storytelling; design, flow, speed of reading a story, slowness of reading a story, changing the speed at which someone reads the story by changing the design of the story. One of the things I discovered was that *most* comic-book artists were stuck in a 1950s style of doing comic books. It was in the mid-'50s, I guess, that it was decided that it was no longer necessary to draw a page *twice* the size that it was going to be reproduced, it was decided to draw the page 150 percent the size that it was going to be reproduced. But all of these artists had been used to drawing the page 200 percent.

Well, at that size your field of vision is not so broad that it encompasses the whole page, in fact even at 150 percent it's not that broad. It's not until it's reduced to its comic-book size that your field of vision can really concentrate and take in the whole page. So what I decided to do was to design my *pages* as though they

was following, or certain kinds of things I was doing."

were one composition, and use the composition of the page to help me tell a story *besides* the individual panels. I realized that that hadn't really been done in comic books before, it was another little toy that I got to play with. So, by designing the page you could take the focus of the reader's eye and move it however you wanted to do it; through design, simple design, nothing complicated or sophisticated.

PAUL: *But it also made it more fun for you?*

NEAL: Oh, yeah!

PAUL: *If you were telling a story that might have bored you or whatever, then you could have fun with the designing?*

NEAL: Right, exactly.

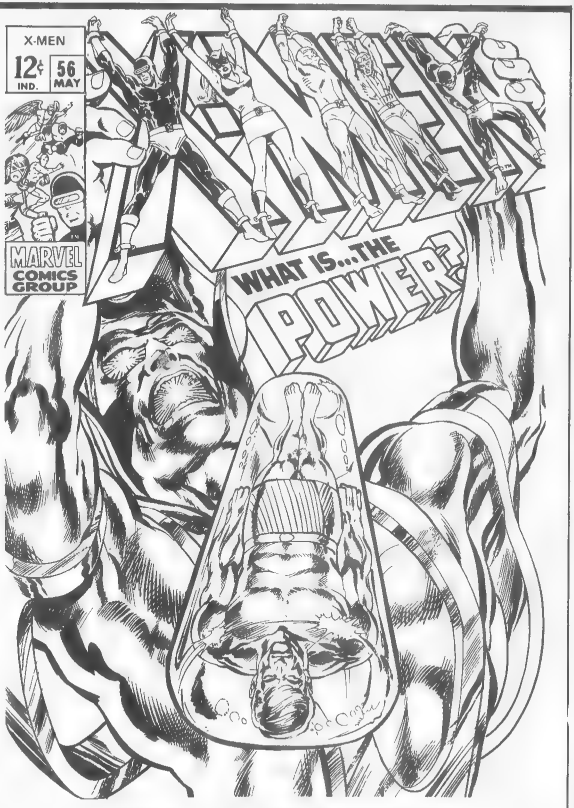
PAUL: *You have to motivate yourself?*

NEAL: Yes. It adds a thing to it that you didn't have before.

PAUL: *Especially in DEADMAN.*

NEAL: A lot of people think there were certain formulas that I was following, or certain kinds of things that I was doing that suddenly it became different. It didn't really become different. What I

"When I went to Marvel Stan offered me any comic



The original cover for X-MEN #56, it was felt that the "logo" was obscured.

book I wanted. Their worst selling title was X-MEN."

was doing was adding other elements that weren't there before, and those are the elements that made it different. A lot of times people will say, "*So-and-so* imitates your work but somehow I don't find it as interesting or involving; I don't understand it, they're doing exactly the same things that you did." Well, no, they're *not* doing the same things that I did. They are picking pieces and putting them together, and it's sort of like putting a jigsaw puzzle together wrong. It doesn't make any sense; it has to be put together right.

PAUL: *Well, I always thought that your process was realistic, very good draftsmanship with an abstract point of view thrown in, abstract design in the middle, while at the same time storytelling.*

NEAL: Basically, that's right except for the middle part, abstract design. Design is what you make it. None of the design that I did, except in certain cases that *failed*, was ever abstract design. In other words, abstract design in the sense that it's thrown together like a **Jackson Pollack**. Design for design's sake was not my goal either, but utilizing design for a separate goal. For example, look at the GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW series and look at the BATMAN work that I did and look at THE X-MEN, just take those three examples. THE X-MEN was a convoluted and complicated story to read, and when you finished with 24 pages you felt like you had read 34 pages, because there was all this stuff going on and it was all jumbled together.

Now, I utilized a lot of design but, at the same time, I caused the eye to *stop* throughout the page, to pause, and to double back. By causing the eye to double back and reinvolve the reader in that panel, I would stop the reader from moving forward. I would make the reader look at something and then look at something else, and then move down and look at something else. So those pages seemed to take a long time to get the story told. It would eventually get told. You had to be a little bit older to understand the comic books, really, but you could get something out of it.

PAUL: *When that stuff came out it was kind of a blow-out, you know what I mean. I had almost given up on THE X-MEN, what a lousy comic book, and then all of a sudden your stuff hit!*

NEAL: Well, as an aside, interrupting the flow of what I was going to say: When I went over to Marvel Comics and they asked me what I wanted to do, Stan actually offered me *any* comic book I wanted to do, FANTASTIC FOUR or whatever. I asked them what their worst selling title was. It was THE X-MEN and they were ready to cancel it in two issues, and they were pretty much just giving it to whoever happened to walk in the door. I said, "I'll take that." "But we're really going to cancel it, you can't bring the sales up fast enough to stop it from being cancelled." "But on the other hand you won't *bother* me with it, right. You won't give me a hard time." "Well, no, do whatever you want."

PAUL: *And you did.*

NEAL: And I did, for about ten issues, until my writer, **Roy Thomas,** was going to get a divorce or something, a very emotional time for him, and it didn't turn out to be worthwhile to move forward on it. And, under any circumstances, the truth of the matter was that the sales really didn't do any good. People must have been taking boxes out of the warehouses and reporting them as being destroyed or something, because I've signed 30,000 or 40,000 of them since then, but I was told that they didn't sell well.

Sketch of Neal's redesigned Angel costume.

What had happened, apparently, was that at the end of that run because comic-book companies don't really get their final sales figures for six months, so within the first six months there was really no change in the sales figures, and even after that there was no meteoric rise — it wasn't until the book was *cancelled* that they started to get figures that implied that the thing was starting to sell better.

And for Marvel the second thing that happened was that as artists like **Dave Cockrum** and **John Byrne** came over to

...Mm... OUTRAGE! SOMEHOW WILL PAY...
HEY BABY!
...HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU PICKING CAITLIN SOMEPLACE?
JOHN-- YOU WERE GOTHAM... AND YESTERDAY, EARLY!
POWER BEAM AND THE GUARDIAN SOLAR ACE
I'D HEARD
I DON'T BELIEVE IN RUSSIA...
OKAY-- EVEN IF, LISTEN, WHITEY, THAT WADDAYA WANNA BE ANYBODY WITH A MACE...
AND IF YOU'RE SO MUCH BACKS IN MY AREA!
YO, THINK HE'S A RACIST, YOLEEN? NOBODY ASKED YOU, JORDE. I NEED A LESSON.
...AND I'M THE SAP WHO'S TEACHING! AS OF NOW, I'M ARRESTING YOU FOR GRAND SENATOR CLUTCHER!
SOMETHING HAPPENS TO HIM... YOU'VE HAD
...BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE WHITEY! SOMETIMES IT REMINDS ME OF THAT BIT ABOUT "HE WHO IS WITHOUT SIN" CASTING THE FIRST STONE."

Above: GREEN LANTERN #87 Adams/Giordano. Right: Neal's breakdowns for pgs. 7-10.

TONIGHT
SENATOR CLAYTON

"ARCHIE joke pages were my first work in comic books."

Neal's first comic-book work, from Archie Comics' THE FLY.

Marvel, the comic book they asked to do was X-MEN, which Marvel had cancelled. So they had to rethink their thinking. The fact that the sales figures had been moving up a little bit and everybody was asking to do X-MEN caused them to bring the thing out again.

PAUL: *Well, I stayed with it as a fan and I was getting pretty disenchanted.*

NEAL: Right. I did miss a point. I was going to make a comparison between THE X-MEN and the BATMAN that I was doing at the time for DC Comics. There was a story, I think it was called "Freaks" or something, with a little boy that had arms like a seal, a big fat woman, a tall skinny guy, and a big bruiser — a very simple BATMAN story. The design work on that BATMAN story is so totally different from the design work on THE X-MEN, and it's designed to *carry* you through the story so that although the story is 16 to 18 pages long it *feels* like a six-page story. That's at the same time that I was doing THE X-MEN and making you think that you had just read a 34-page story. The difference was the design and approach. If you take a given X-MEN and you take that BATMAN and you compare the style of the storytelling you will *see* that one was designed to make you read slowly, and one was designed to make you read fast.

PAUL: *As a slight shift, I want to discuss the first comic-book stuff that you did. You drew for Archie Comics on THE FLY, that one panel. How did that come about?*

NEAL: As you probably know, **Jack Kirby** and **Joe Simon** were jumping around from comic-book company to comic-book company to comic-book company doing superhero comics, and just as I was getting out of school they had started to work for Archie doing THE FLY and THE SHIELD and a bunch of other comic-book titles. I thought, "Boy, this is what I want to do. I want to work with **Jack Kirby** and **Joe Simon.**" And, of course, being slightly more illustrative, I thought that I could do a little bit more justice to the Fly than make him quite so cartooney. So, I did a sample page, *two* sample pages, and I took them up to Archie Comics to get work — this is 1959, I guess. Things were a little rough in the comic-book business. They gave me ARCHIE pages to do. I went back and forth with ARCHIE samples, and they kept on picking them apart. I realized that they were picking them apart for no really valid reasons, so I traced a couple of pages and brought them in, and they didn't recognize them and decided to use me on ARCHIE.

PAUL: *You actually did some ARCHIE stories?*

NEAL: I did some ARCHIE joke pages, that was my first work in the comic-book business. And outside of the fact that I needed to make some money, it being 1959 and all, and the fact that I really wanted to get closer to this FLY thing — I kept on telling them I'd really like to work on these comic books — I bothered them enough that they had me talk to **Joe Simon.** Rather than talk to me at the office — I somehow never showed up when he was there — when I went to the office one day they called him on the phone, and he had seen the pages — **Jack Kirby** hadn't seen the pages — and he talked to me and gave me some advice.

His advice was, "I'm going to do the biggest favor in the world for you, I'm going to turn you down, kid. You deserve to do better than being in a business that's dying, comic books. So, I'm going to tell you we're not going to use you. I think your work is good and otherwise I would use you, but I gotta turn you down."

PAUL: *He thought he was doing you a favor?*

NEAL: He thought he was doing me the biggest favor in the world, he was saving my career.

PAUL: *Were you crushed?*

NEAL: I was *crushed,* of course! But what can you do, that's the way it goes. Interestingly enough, I left the pages there and the next time I came in one of the pages that I had left as a sample was cut up, sliced up. Apparently there was a transformation panel in one of the FLY pages that just was not what they wanted it to be, and they wanted to extend the story — I don't know exactly what the reason was — but the fact that the page was cut up was more than offset by the fact that they had decided to use one of my panels in THE FLY. They pasted it up to the page and they used it as a transitional panel, so that was really my first printed superhero work. I was 18 at the time so I felt pretty good. But they wouldn't use me on the book. They *admitted* that that was one of the best transformations that took place and they really liked the work — but no, they weren't going to use me. That's indicative of the time.

Neal's 1985 version of the NEW X-MEN. Adams both penciled & inked this illustration.

A rare poster-size sketch of Deadman from an Italian comics convention.

"I wanted to draw all my life, so I had to be good."

PAUL: *Did they pay you?*

NEAL: Yeah, they paid me, they were a very straight-up company. But when I say it was indicative of the time, nobody was getting into comics at that time, it didn't *matter* how good the samples were. I had very good samples, but nobody was buying. They honestly and truly felt that they were doing you a favor by not hiring you.

PAUL: *Oh, God.*

NEAL: It was a terrible time in the business. Comic books were at *probably* their lowest time. They were considered to be *junk*. People were *ashamed* to be in the business. People called themselves *anything* other than comic-book artists. In many ways the best of the artists, the ones that we as fans like, the people that used to work for E.C. Comics, had gone several different ways. I don't think that it's incorrect to say that **Jack Kirby** was not considered to be one of your top comic-book artists at the time. In retrospect, people realize the contributions that Jack made, but the truth is that we appreciated more people like **Al Williamson** and **Jack Davis** and **Reed Crandall** and **Frank Frazetta**, and they had basically gone away.

The people that were left *couldn't* necessarily do something else, and the mere fact that **Jack Kirby** was drawing for Archie Comics is indicative of the times. Who would go to Archie Comics to do superhero art? You would tend to go to whoever the big guys were, and of course Jack *did*. Jack went everywhere But it was a very very difficult time and nobody really thought that the comic-book business was going to last. There was no reason for it to continue to exist So, they were doing me a favor, in their minds; not in my mind, of course.

PAUL: *Well, did you plead with the guy, what?*

NEAL: Well, you know, when you're 18 years old you don't actually *plead*, but I'm sure that he could read the pleading in my voice, how much I really wanted to do it. But no, that was the end of it.

PAUL: *So, you always wanted to be a cartoonist, or did you want to be an illustrator? What was it?*

NEAL: My original goal was to be an illustrator, but I always felt very interested in comic books. I thought that comic books would lead me into illustration if I applied myself correctly. But the truth of the matter is that nobody at that time considered comic books to be an end. Comic books were a transitional thing to something else, either to a syndicated strip or to illustration of one sort or another.

Since I had to make money as soon as I got out of high school, in spite of the fact that I may have thought of myself as a potential illustrator, I thought of myself more as somebody who *must* make a living doing comic books immediately, in order to survive. I could see myself doing other things, getting some kind of a job, and *failing* at what I wanted to do. I wanted to draw all my life, so I had to be very good. At that time . . . there's really no comic-book artist that I am aware of that is five years my senior or five years my junior. I don't have associates in this field that are my age, none of them exist. I say five years, it's actually probably more than that.

PAUL: *Yeah?*

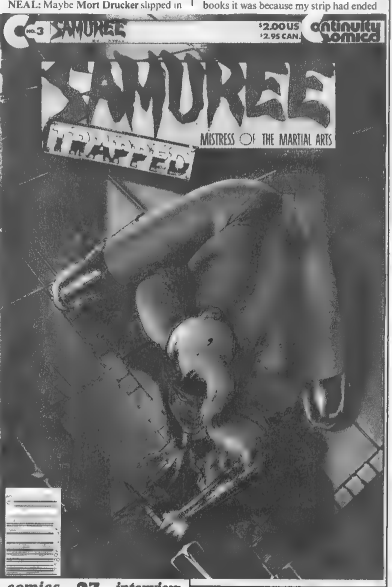
NEAL: Maybe **Mort Drucker** slipped in there five years ahead of me, but it's really a big long time. To the best of my knowledge nobody really new got into comic books between 1953 and 1963.

PAUL: *Yeah, you're right. It wasn't until about '66 that I noticed anybody else was coming in, and that's when you really first started to do comic books per se.*

NEAL: Well, that's when . . . apparently it seemed as though I fell from out of the sky.

PAUL: *I was aware of you from BEN CASEY.*

NEAL: My experience was ARCHIE joke pages, that little FLY thing, commercial comics — which was the only thing I could go to a syndicated strip, and I kept my hand in as much as I could that way. And when I got into comic books it was because my strip had ended



Center spread piece by Neal of DC's Spectre/Green Arrow/Deadman.

"There still are artists that draw like Byrne or Adams."

ADAM EXPLAINS...
THAT GUN'LL BE READY TO FIRE TOMORROW! THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET TO IT IS THROUGH THE GUARD SHIP, SO.....
WHEN ADAM FINISHES HIS EXPLINATION TO ALANNA!---
TAKE CARE, ADAM!

These Adam Strange drawings were done by Neal at age 16.

by mutual consent with Bing Crosby Productions and NEA. It was a very nice arrangement, and at that point I had decided to go on and become an illustrator. I had done a portfolio in various illustrator styles of the day — a little bit of an attempt to create my own style, but not much at that time because I was interested in getting work — my portfolio was stolen, and I had to make a living.

PAUL: *What a drag. It's kind of sad that comic-book artists just look at comic books and not further their horizons.*

NEAL: In comic books we sort of live in a closed society, we're not all that aware of illustrators.

PAUL: *But you brought something from the outside in, same as in his own way Steranko did.*

NEAL: Well, it's unfortunate, but this was true in the past — it's less true now. There still are the inbred comic-book artists that draw like **John Byrne** or **Neal Adams** or whatever, but there are illustrators who do paint, illustrators who do have line techniques that have nothing to do with comic books, people who are fans of some of the older illustrators, and they are in the field with us. They are expanding at least the visions of some of the comic-book artists

PAUL: *Now, you were working at Johnstone and Cushing with guys like Dan Barry and —*

NEAL: Dan Barry really wasn't there then. The people I worked with were **Tom Schever,** who nobody seems to know, **Alex Kotzky,** who does APARTMENT 3-G and is probably a better illustrator than people realize, except he's stuck doing a syndicated strip —

PAUL: *Maybe not for long.*

NEAL: I'd *love* to get him to work for Continuity.

PAUL: *You should call him, he's looking for other work.*

NEAL: Yeah?

PAUL: *Yeah.*

NEAL: Then I will, thanks. The arrangement has been made this moment. A guy by the name of **Elmer Wexler,** who nobody knows but

PAUL: *I know him.*

NEAL: Lou Fine, people like that. It was a haven for some of the better comic-book artists that escaped during the early '50s and started to do commercial comics. Commercial comics paid more money, so a person could do commercial comics and then either get a syndicated strip or become an illustrator. So it was an *escape* of some sort to some of those guys. I, strangely enough, while I was working at Johnstone and Cushing, I was politicked into some of that type of thinking. It was very easy to think that, you know, comic books were a dead end. In a way, while I was working at Johnstone and Cushing and when I had the syndicated strip, it occurred to me that I would never ever do comic books, never on a regular basis.

I was actually forced into doing comic books, only to find that I liked it more than anything else. I would never make the choice *now* to be an illustrator or

JUST AS THE SORAMS ARE ABOUT TO FIRE .....
??COMMANDER! COMMANDER! THE HUMAN..HE...HE HAS DISAPPEARED!
THE SHIP COMMANDER SENDS HIS MEN OUTSIDE THE SHIP TO SEARCH FOR ADAM STRANGE!...
--AND DON'T COME BACK WITHOUT HIM!

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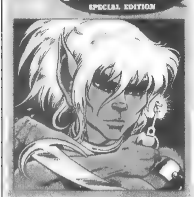

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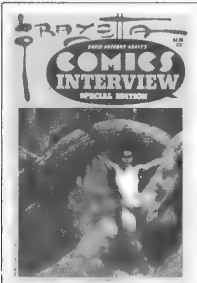
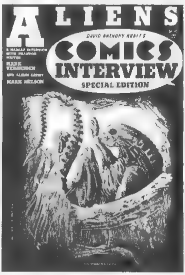


FRAZETTA Frank Frazetta. This artist of great renown shares his thoughts on many media from comics to fine art. Frazetta cover.

SEX & VIOLENCE IN COMICS Frank Miller, John Byrne, Jerry Perles together with Ron Turner all expound on the limits and far-reaching effects of laws and perceptions. Plus an open forum from the star-reach Chicago trade show on the censorship theme.

WATCHMEN Alan Moore reveals what he thinks of super-heroes and talks about his controversial creation Daniel Greenberg and Ray Winninger on the WATCHMEN game modules. Hank Rose on the secrets of a marketeer. Dave Gibbons cover.

LONE WOLF. Frank Miller speaks his mind. Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima, creators of a Japanese legend, in a talk from Tokyo. Plus First Comics crew Rick Obadiah, Kurt Goldzung, Alex Wald, Paul Gulnan, Willie Schubert and Rick Oliver. Kojima cover.



ALIENS. Mark Nelson and Mark Verheiden point out the positive and negative problems of dealing with Aliens. Mike Richardson and Randy Stradley on directing a Dark Horse, and managing freelance talent. Nelson cover.

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"Orson Welles was a comic-book fan; and

Pencil illustration

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to be a comic-strip artist. My interests are now in comic books and in film. I do advertising work to hone my skills and to earn money, and there is a lot of advertising work that is a lot more challenging than people understand it to be.

PAUL: *Sure.*

NEAL: But comic books to me are in a way the *ultimate*. There is little difference between a comic book and a film. There's a difference that doesn't represent quality, it's not a qualitative difference, and in a way a movie is *less* personal than a comic book. The artist does the whole thing in a comic book, and in a movie you have to depend on other people.

PAUL: *And also you're at your own disposal in the time it takes to enjoy a comic book, you adjust the speed. It becomes more personal.*

NEAL: Yes. In many ways I think of the comic book as being the ultimate art form. I realize that's a little strange to say, and I wouldn't want anybody human to hear me say this, but in many ways it represents the closest thing that you could possibly get as an artist to *creating* with your craft. You are able to tell the story all yourself. You tell a story, you show *how* the story is done, you *pace* the story, you *design* the story — you do the beginning, middle and end of the story. What better can you do than that?

The last time that happened was when people were doing cave drawings. Once we got out of the caves we lost that, because it wasn't up to the artist then, it was up to the people that employed the

Fellini was a comic-strip artist himself."

artists, told them what stories to tell. In many ways, in comic books today, we have a lot more freedom than that. We can approach a publisher, very often, and ask to tell the story that we want to tell, and if we're any good they'll let us tell it.

PAUL: *Which is why I'm trying to take my book to you.*

NEAL: And succeeding.

PAUL: *That's what I like, and also this brings me to another area. Even as a kid — I think you will agree with this — in reading comics it must have crossed your mind, as it did mine, "Hey, this would have made a nice TV show, this would have made a great movie." Now, all these years later, that's what we're seeing. Do you agree with that, and also what did you think of THE FLASH?*

NEAL: What did I think of THE FLASH?

PAUL: *Did you agree with the first part of the question?*

NEAL: Yeah, I agree. It never occurred to me that comic books were anything less than a simpler version of a film. I make a direct relationship between the two –

PAUL: *When you were a kid did you feel that way?*

NEAL: Oh, yeah. Comic books are the only form that kids take their own money and spend on doing it, outside of films, and I'm sure that I said that 20 years ago in some interview that you'll dig up.

PAUL: *You don't have to force kids to buy a comic book.*

NEAL: You don't. You have to force kids to buy children's books, you have to buy them *for* them, because they have no initial interest in them themselves – an interest can grow, but it doesn't come of its own bidding. When a kid sees a comic book he wants to read it, he wants to have that experience, just like when he goes to a movie. There's a very close relationship between the two, and in many instances movie directors and producers and effects directors are very much motivated and influenced and inspired by comic books. **Orson Welles** was a comic-book fan; **Fellini** was a comic-strip artist, himself. More and more people in the film business were originally oriented by comic books, and continue to be, and will be in the future, I believe.

I see films as originating in the brains of comic-book artists more than in the brains of novelists. Not in movies like ORDINARY PEOPLE or TERMS OF ENDEARMENT, because movies come from all types of different sources and there are all kinds of different movies, but the action/adventure, science-fiction, science-fantasy movies are going to be much more full-blown in the mind of the comic-book artist. One of the reasons why we see more and more success in the films that have been storyboarded is because you're utilizing the talents of comic-book artists to create the story before it's put on celluloid. And by doing that you create those values that kids are used to, want to be used to, and have in their own minds. The closest relationship that I can make from a good comic book, outside of the direct relationship it has to film, is that a comic book is like pictures from the mind.

PAUL: *Yes.*

NEAL: It's not pictures from a camera. Pictures from the mind have the freedom of this incredible camera and lighting and all these magical things that could only come from some fantastic expenditure of money and a fantastic imagination, or *simply* from the imagination of one human mind. To create good movies you have to be able to translate that imagination onto paper first. In my mind people are crazy to do multimillion dollar pictures without seeing something on paper first of what's going to be created.

PAUL: *Well, that was always the old way of doing films, and then it changed in the '50s.*

NEAL: It got kind of stupid.

PAUL: *Yeah.*

PAUL: *What strips did you work on?*

NEAL: Well, I only literally worked on BEN CASEY, but I did a little bit of fill-in on several strips. I worked on SECRET AGENT X-9 for **Williamson,** two weeks of that. I worked on RIP KIRBY, managed to run a couple of weeks of that. I worked on PETER SCRATCH for **Lou Fine.** I think I probably made it look better because Lou's stuff was not at its peak at that point. I freely admit I didn't do a very good job on **Williamson's** stuff.

PAUL: *That looked like a nice little crossover, you know.*

NEAL: It was weird; I just wasn't into the style, I guess, and there wasn't enough time to learn it.

PAUL: *How did that come about, were you working with him at Johnstone and Cushing?*

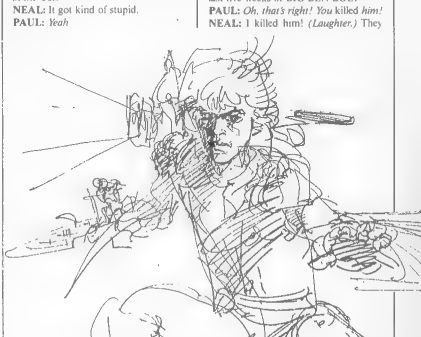
NEAL: With **Lou Fine?** oh . . . I guess he was sick or something. He tended to get sick and he needed help — that's pretty much how these came about. I never, like, approached somebody and said, "Can I ghost for you?" I got a call and I did it. I did two weeks of dailies for **Stan Drake.** A couple of the *interesting* things I did, I ghosted for **Gray Morrow** on BUCK ROGERS.

PAUL: *Yeah?*

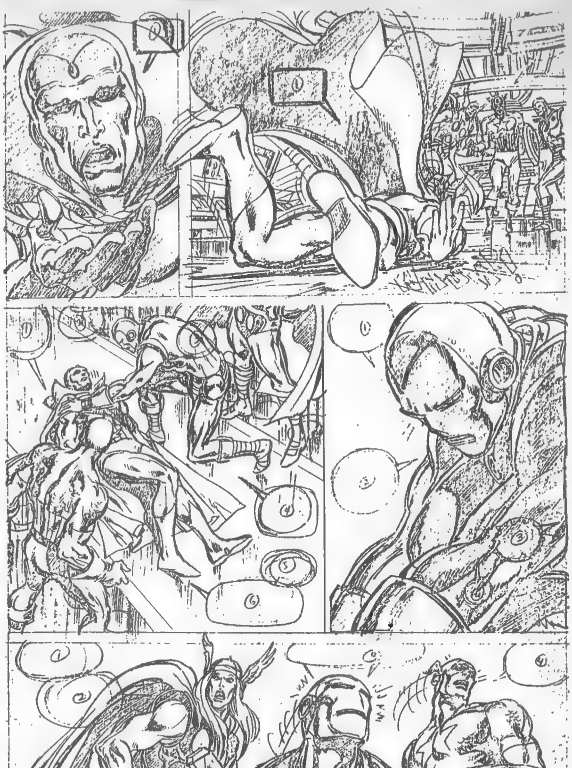
NEAL: I did a *bunch* of stuff on BUCK ROGERS. The other thing I did was the last five weeks of BIG BEN BOLT.

PAUL: *Oh, that's right! You* killed *him!*

NEAL: I killed him! *(Laughter.)* They



Here and to the right: A rare look at Neal's pencil work for THE AVENGERS #93, his first issue.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"The history in this country against comics is appalling!

made the mistake of letting me do it.

PAUL: *You could do whatever the hell you wanted?*

NEAL: Well, I had actually felt that BIG BEN BOLT shouldn't end, and my attitude was they should bring him back as something better. I thought, "Well, I'll *kill* him, but I'll kill him in such a way that they'll rebuild him, make something *else* out of him, make a better strip out of it." And I did it. I killed him, and I tried to call the syndicate and say, "Now look, guys, I can turn this into a good strip now. Now that we've, in fact, killed him, what we do with him is to rebuild him, to turn him into —" I mean, BIG BEN BOLT, you've got opportunities there.

PAUL: *Sure.*

NEAL: It was almost as though they were the walking dead, I really had no perception that their brains were alive. I don't mean to offend syndicated strip people, but the truth of the matter is that they are not in connection in any way with comic books. It's almost as though they live on a different planet. I, for example, presented **Joe Kubert** to the syndicate for doing THE GREEN BERET. I was offered THE GREEN BERET myself and I was doing BEN CASEY at the time, and my attitude was, "Well, I'm doing BEN CASEY, and I read the book by **Robin Moore** —

PAUL: *Yeah, but didn't that come about because of the BEN CASEY Vietnam thing that you did?*

NEAL: No. It came about, strangely enough, by the basic ignorance of comic-strip writers and comic-strip syndicates. They had no idea who to approach, they simply had no idea. And because **Elliot Caplin** and **Jerry Capp,** who were both **Al Capp's** brothers, worked in an office next to one another, and Elliot had always felt that he would have enjoyed working with me — and Jerry got me, as it turned out — Elliot felt, "Well, maybe I can get Neal to work on GREEN BERET" I read the book by **Robin Moore** and I felt that I wasn't the right person for it. I have a history against the Vietnam war, a very strong history, and so I didn't feel I was the right person. Yet, at the same time, they were asking me who should do it, if I wasn't going to do it for them.

I was appalled! I could have given them, just off the top of my head, **John Severin, Mort Drucker, Al Williamson, Joe Kubert, Russ Heath,** whoever — there was a bunch of guys who could have done it. Well, they didn't know who they were, had no idea, no conception of who they were! So, when I suggested **Joe Kubert,** who I felt was the best for it, who could make it a very good successful strip, I warned them ahead of time that perhaps they would not like his work when they first saw it, because it's definitely no **Stan Drake, John Culien Murphy** type work, but that they would *learn* to like it. And they did, once they started with Joe. And that's when I first met **Joe Kubert,** practically on the day that he signed to do a syndicated strip, which in the end was the dream of all comic-book artists — it was a pretty nice thing to be able to do.

PAUL: *I know, I know. In talking to a lot of the older guys, they all said that. It was always the aspiration to do a daily. Then with you, whatever happened, whether you got fed up or bored with BEN CASEY, that you gave yours up must have really blown a few people out, because there was some status to it.*

NEAL: There was, and I ran into that when I started doing comic books. It was almost as though when people heard about it they felt sorry for me that I had lost the strip. I explained that I didn't want to do it anymore, I was interested in doing other things. But they felt, because that had been their *goal* for so long, somehow that this was a bad thing. It was a changing time. I felt fine about it. I was well out of it. I had learned all I wanted to learn doing it, so I was very comfortable.

But beyond that, it wasn't just that they had an attitude about syndicated strips, they also had an attitude about their own business. These guys weren't *proud* that they were comic-book artists. I spent a lot of time in a lot of conversations with guys, saying, "God, you're a comic-book artist, you are really something; this is an important thing," and they thought I was crazy! They couldn't believe that anybody felt strongly about comic books, and I couldn't believe they felt the way they did about their work.

PAUL: *I've come across some of that in talking with some of those guys. Of course, their attitude has changed since, as things have gotten better. But whatever happened to that little-kid enthusiasm that made you want to do it in the first place?*

NEAL: The truth is that you have to understand it from the point of view of history. What happened to that little kid enthusiasm is it got *crushed*. The history in this country against comic books is appalling! If you travel to France and

In France, they think th[illegible]u're involved in an art form."

Rare pencils from GREEN LANTERN/ GREEN ARROW #89 cover, by Neal.

have a normal conversation with a person who is involved in the comic-book business in any way, they think that you're involved in an art form. They think that American comic-book artists and comic-strip artists are like *gods.*

PAUL: *I went to Lucca and I felt like a movie star, it was funny.*

NEAL: Oh, yeah.

PAUL: *I had nothing great published or anything.*

NEAL: And they just treat you so well.

PAUL: *Yeah, it was kind of nice.*

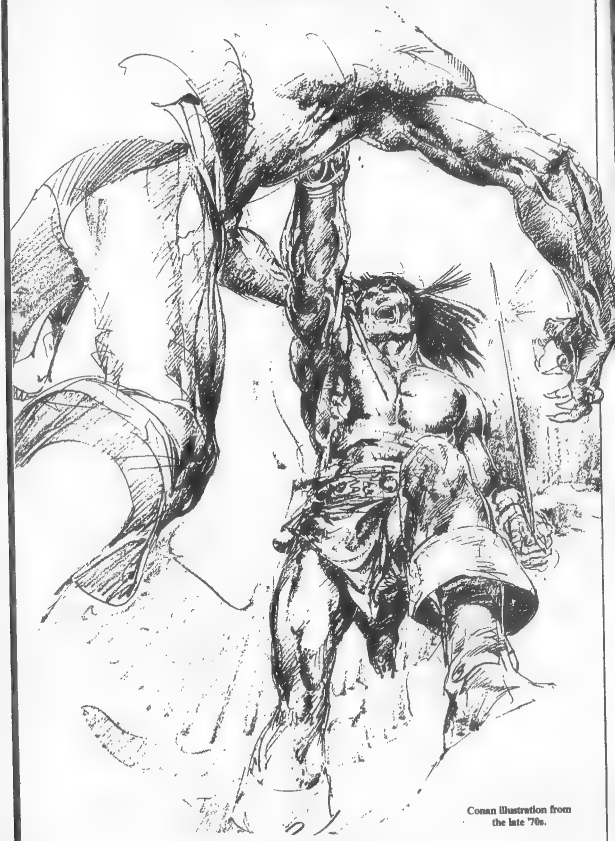
NEAL: Like a human being. *(Laughter.)*

PAUL: *Well, that brings me to the point of the sad case of Siegel and Shuster, where you helped them get some sort of pension there. In their overzealousness as young kids to get published, and it was more by accident for a fill-in on a book that SUPERMAN happened, they just signed away their rights and ended up with 30 or 40 years of misery. Quite a shame. And then you came along with Byron Preiss or somebody and negotiated the whole thing?*

NEAL: Not with Byron. Let me just say —

PAUL: *We heard about it in Australia.*

NEAL: Let me just say parenthetically that if you want to run anything about this you really have to go back to the VILLAGE VOICE article. I *can't* tell you



Conan illustration from the late '70s.

"In all honesty, THE FLASH was terrific!"

about this, and the reason I can't tell you is that I signed a statement that said I will not tell you about this.

PAUL: *Oh, okay.*

NEAL: Not just you.

PAUL: *Anybody, yeah.*

NEAL: I think this at some point will become a matter of public record, but this was a bitterly fought dispute. It was the first time in my life that I ever went to a doctor and he told me that my blood pressure was going up.

PAUL: *Whoa!*

NEAL: It lasted for a good three months, and the *adventure* of what happened is a very bawdy, rowdy adventure.

PAUL: *A tough fight?*

NEAL: A tough fight, but in all honesty, I pretty much agreed not to say anything about it. If it was just for me I wouldn't mind, but you've got two guys that created Superman and we want them to be fine. They're fine now — I *hope* they're fine.

PAUL: *Well, I like that; I thought it was a very good thing, no matter how it happened, that in the end they got something for it.*

NEAL: Yes.

PAUL: *And I feel it would be nice if a similar thing could happen for Jack Kirby.*

NEAL: I'll tell you, I think that it's important to know that to a certain extent Jack has gotten a raw deal, but to a certain extent Jack is randy enough to rise above it. He's not a helpless victim as much as he is a person who has understood what has happened to him and has taken his knocks, and has come through it pretty good.

PAUL: *Well, he's got a pretty happy disposition, Jack has.*

NEAL: Yeah. We're talking about the difference between **Jack Kirby** and **Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster**. . . who when I met them Jerry had a job for $7,500 a year as a clerk, and Joe had no income at all and lived off his brother and as often as not didn't have enough money to buy an overcoat for the winter. Two very different cases. I don't equate the two. Jack was in the business when we forced the compames to write better contracts, he's had the advice of lawyers — we've come out of the dark ages. And I heard recently that Jack has gotten a lot of his originals back, and I think that was a big thing.

Personally, I would like to see one or two percentage points of all those Marvel characters that Jack created belonging to Jack, but on the other hand I think that Jack is catching up, he's fine in his way. If it were me, if I were Marvel, I would find a way to give him a piece. As much as I have fought for the return of original art, the reason I fought for it was for principle, not to make money. It's nice to be able to make some extra money on it, but if it belongs to a person it *belongs* to a person, it's not a matter of whether or not it belongs to a person for $50 or $5. I've given my artwork to my kids, basically.

PAUL: *Luckily, a lot of that stuff has changed and guys like Stan Drake — I don't know if Stan had that attitude about comic books —*

NEAL: Well, he was a syndicated strip artist so he was safely out of the battle.

PAUL: *Now, with Dan Barry and Stan Drake doing work for you, is that going to be an on-going thing?*

NEAL: Oh, I hope! I would just love that. They're . . . I grew up looking at their work, this is like *hero* time.

PAUL: *It's a dream team?*

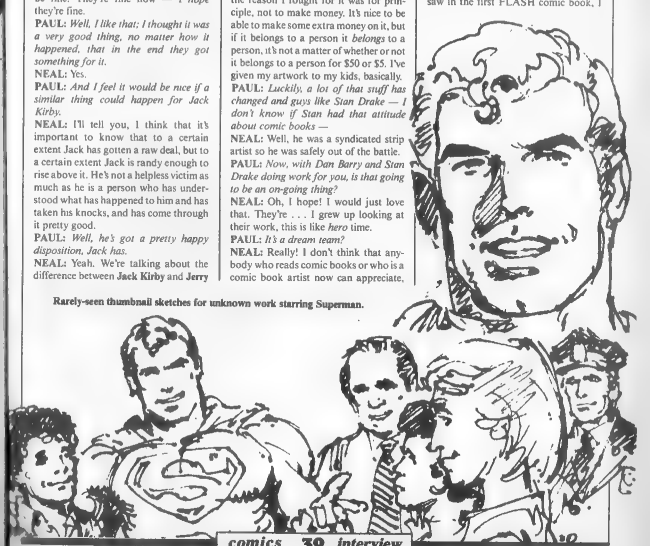
NEAL: Really! I don't think that anybody who reads comic books or who is a comic book artist now can appreciate, like somebody from my generation and, of course, there's only *one* of me – *(Laughter.)* — how terrific it is to have these two guys working in comic books. I'm totally in love with it.

PAUL: *I was very lucky as a kid that they used to reprint all of the stuff from the '30s, we'd get it in the '40s, so I was able to see all that stuff.*

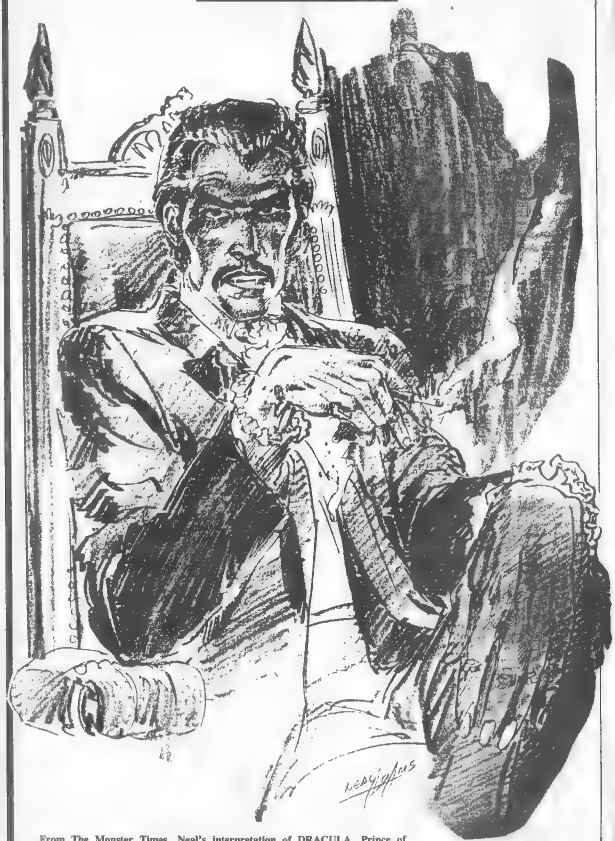
NEAL: It's fabulous.

PAUL: *Dynamite. Now, I was talking before about THE FLASH; What did you think of that?*

NEAL: In all honesty, I do not care what anybody else thinks about THE FLASH, I only care about what I think of THE FLASH, and as many times as you hear me talk this will be one of the few times that I will actually express an opinion — I thought it was *terrific!* Outside of not being able to see the cup of coffee caught in slow motion that I saw in the first FLASH comic book, I



Rarely-seen thumbnail sketches for unknown work starring Superman.



From The Monster Times, Neal's interpretation of DRACULA, Prince of Darkness.

"I'm appalled at these last two attempts at THE HULK."

thought they carried across a comic-book idea successfully. Whether it will continue to be successful, whether or not they can bring the scripts up just a notch higher than the first script, is something else

I felt that the first script to a certain extent was more like an hour show stretched out to two hours — but even so I thought it was terrific, one of the better successes. I felt the same way about the early HULK shows. I'm appalled at these last two attempts at doing THE HULK again, but the *first* HULK shows are very very good. And I think THE FLASH is very good. I just hope that it catches on, it will pave the way for a lot of us.

PAUL: *What I liked, for one thing, is they used a guy with a bit of muscle, then to put on the muscle suit I didn't mind it, as opposed to Michael Keaton, no muscle in a muscle suit.*

NEAL: Right, but with **Michael Keaton** they did something successful. But in this case, even when he had that muscle suit on, he looked *slim*. You *want* the Flash to look slim, and he just looked wonderful. The photos of the guy in costume do not do justice to what you saw, the publicity photos look *horrible*. He doesn't have a great profile, the costume doesn't look good on his head, the musculature around his lower stomach, his abdomen, is very unattractive; but in the show it's totally different, a totally different perception. And as long as there was that darkness there, and as long as you were hitting highlights and stuff, it just looked great.

And I think there's a certain potential for the warmth of the character that kids could appreciate as well. To make him the brother of a cop and to have him involved in the business of keeping peace, being a policeman, I think is very good. It's a good standard for kids to look up to, and it presents a comic-book character in a good light. They hit most

Pencil drawing from one of Marvel's horror black and whites of years gone by. This character was known as Gabriel: Devil Hunter.

"I'm supposed to be doing a Batman story [illegible] Denny. It

may have hit a snag, but I suspect that I'll do a Ba[illegible]n."

of the lights, they really did.

PAUL: *Yeah, I thought they hit on that old sort of "what a hero is supposed to be" approach. And the guy who played the part, Shipp, was very warm and believable.*

NEAL: I thought so, too.

PAUL: *Didn't play it with contempt.*

NEAL: And they didn't *approach* the whole thing with contempt! After all, it is very difficult to explain a guy running around in red underwear, very hard to get past that. I thought they went to a great deal to the good in trying to explain that in a realistic basis. It will never be satisfactory because it's sort of silly in a way, but it was satisfactory enough. There was a lot of mood, a lot of mood lighting, a lot of '50s-cum-'90s feeling, and I was really happy with it. I'm sorry if there's anybody who reads this who thinks that I should have an altered view of this, but I think that there are just too many cynical people in this business ready to dump on a sincere effort. This was a sincere effort and, if it doesn't make it, it won't be because they didn't try real hard.

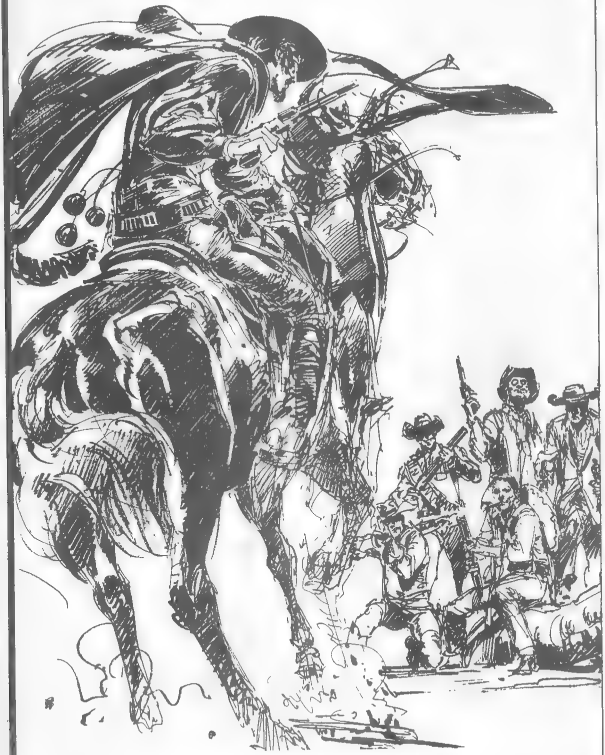
PAUL: *Well, I remember being in the studio and how enthused you were about getting home in time to catch it. I thought that was pretty good — same as I felt when we were talking about THE RANGE RIDER. You haven't lost that little-kid enthusiasm, you know.*

NEAL: I think I originated it. *(Laughter.)*

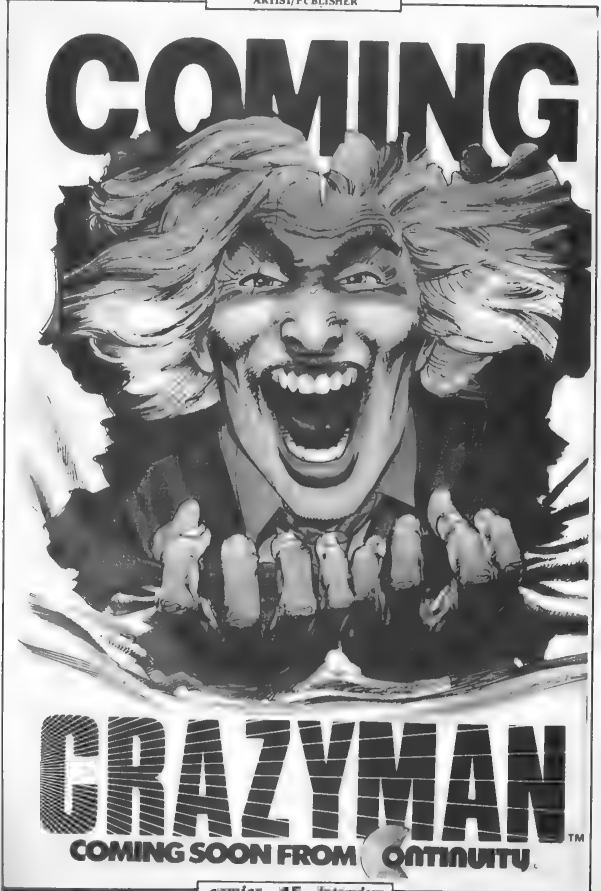
PAUL: *So, do you see yourself doing any other work for DC or Marvel to get your name out there on any other stuff?*

NEAL: I'm supposed to be doing a BATMAN story with **Denny O'Neil.** The job may have hit a snag, but I suspect I'll do a BATMAN story at some point. The question of whether or not I'll do stuff for Marvel or DC on a regular basis is answered by the fact that I have my own *publishing* company. I can only really do stuff for somebody else — how shall I put it? — if the price is right. I have my own studio and my own people to be responsible to. I could no more do a comic-book story for DC or Marvel for what they consider to be normal prices than I could walk through my own studio and slap the people who work with me. I can't *do* that! By taking my work away from the studio I would lower our ability to make money, to make a living, and I just can't do that.

PAUL: *Also, you can do the stories that you want.*



The pencils for the cover of WEIRD WESTERN TALES (El Diablo)#15.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NEAL: In my own books, yes. And in the end, if it makes the publishing end *grow* as a business, then I provide *more* work for my company, more work as a business, more work for the industry; I'm expanding the business. Remember, the reason I dropped out of comics, out of working for DC and Marvel, was first because I didn't like the work-for-hire contract — and I *still* don't like it. I don't write work-made-for-hire contracts unless somebody actually asks me to. *(Laughter.)* There are people who actually *ask* for it, I don't know why, but that would be the only condition under which I would do it. Outside of that, I don't write those kind of contracts, and I don't believe in them

And the reason I got out of DC and Marvel, in many ways, was because when I was doing DC and Marvel comics I did all that I could do to move the industry *forward* technically and technologically within the field. I had done drop outs, I had done all kinds of stuff on covers, I had expanded the color range of DC comics, I had done new techniques, experimented — and in many ways all of the new artists that came in subsequent to myself basically took the attitude "Well, if **Neal Adams** can do it then I can do it."

PAUL: *Yeah.*

NEAL: So we got a whole *explosion* of comic-book artists that wanted to try new things. Once that was done the problems that remained had to do with contracts, had to do with rights, had to do with the kind of paper we print on, the kind of printing process that we work with, all of these other factors. There was no way for me to work on it *within* the field, I had already done as much as I could.

PAUL: *Within the parameters, yeah.*

NEAL: Within the parameters that they set up, you now. They were still printing on toilet paper and they were still printing with the most primitive presses that you can print any printed medium on. I felt I could make a much better contribution from the *outside* affecting the whole industry, so I started doing things like financing creative works and taking them overseas, selling them overseas, so that a company in the United States couldn't buy all rights.

PAUL: *Oh, Howard Chaykin said that you took one of his. Was it CODY STARBUCK?*

NEAL: It was.

PAUL: *And did very nicely on that.*

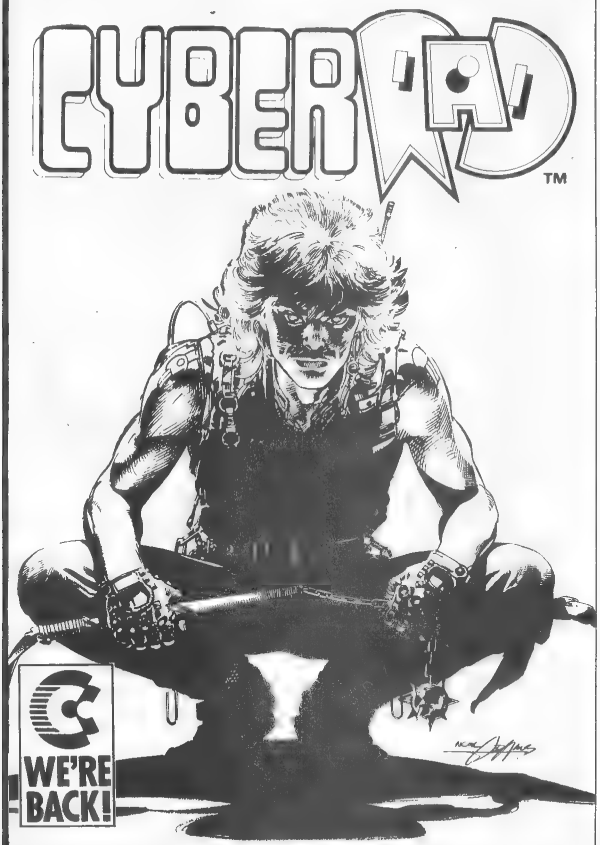
NEAL: Yes.

PAUL: *He was very happy about that.*

NEAL: It wasn't just Howard's, it was Howards' and **Larry Hama, Ed Davis — PAUL:** *Oh, that was that thing I never saw, like a John Wayne in space thing?*
NEAL: Yeah, yeah. The idea was that every time an artist presented a piece of work to DC or Marvel, DC or Marvel would take all rights or else they wouldn't print it. Well, it was the way the business was run and you can't fault a lion for being a lion. They don't know any better, that's what they do. But in the book field — I mean, people take rights *all* of the time, you can't make a deal with somebody without them taking rights — but the idea is to leave a little behind so if there's a potential then you share in the potential. That's the way it's done in book book publishing; that's the way it's done, basically, everywhere.
PAUL: *Well, that's a good incentive to put more out, you know.*
NEAL: Yeah. So what I did was since I knew it was going to happen, and since I was making a certain amount of money with the studio, I took that money and I paid people to do comics in the *hope* that I would be able to sell them overseas and give people percentages of that, keep percentages for myself because I was laying out this money.
PAUL: *Sure.*
NEAL: I haven't actually broken even on this deal yet. And then I could come back to the United States and go to DC or Marvel or HEAVY METAL and say, "I have these projects, we've colored them with bluelines or they're painted or whatever, it's done." They would say they want all rights and then I would be able to say, "Well, I've already sold rights overseas, I *can't* give you all rights. I can give you one-time printing rights or two-time printing rights, but basically my hands are tied." *(Laughter.)* Of course my hands weren't tied, that was a lie, but basically what could they say? I could sell to HEAVY METAL, I could sell to Marvel, I could sell to DC.

Now, that didn't necessarily work. DC and Marvel were not always buying what I was selling, and the projects weren't moving along as fast as they should have. But what was happening is that other artists and other publishers were looking at this and saying, "Wow, you mean that we can just pay an artist to do this and just take part of the rights and they would rather work for us?" DC and Marvel started to go, "Uh-oh!" *(Laughter.)*
PAUL: *They got scared.*
NEAL: They thought, "Well, wait a second, maybe we had better do some-

Neal Adams sketched this WARLOCK drawing at the 1974 San Diego Comic Con.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"I was reticent to have the industry form a guild."

thing about this." And suddenly things started to move, the whole industry started to change.

PAUL: *They started to give benefits.*

NEAL: Well, the things that directly came out of it was royalties.

PAUL: *This was ACBA?*

NEAL: Well, the Academy of Comic Book Arts never . . . it was not a guild, it can't be too overt with what it does. I was reticent to help the industry form a guild because I felt that we were a small enough industry that we would be better off acting as individuals. I didn't want to take the individual out of it. At the same time, as the president of the Academy — as I was for a couple of years — I caused a very lively debate to see if people really did want a guild. A minority wanted a guild and the majority didn't want the guild, and once the facts were laid out it seemed better to be independent.

But at the same time we were putting a lot of pressure on DC and Marvel. We were used at one point to settle on a dispute between DC and Marvel, we acted as arbitrators for them and they both volunteered to follow our decision. So, we had a fair amount of clout, they really respected us. Sometimes I think they respected the people who were doing it; **Dick Giordano** perhaps inspired a little bit more respect than we might have gotten otherwise. But at the same time we were able to peaceably go about trying to make these changes, without being antagonistic to the companies.

PAUL: *Well, you finally got a combination of artist and businessman.*

NEAL: Right. That was another thing, was that through Continuity being in mid-city we also tried as much as possible to create certain *concepts* within the industry. One of the things that I would advise people on a regular basis is that . . . look, if you get a contract and you know you're going to sign it, don't sign it on the day you get it. I'm not telling you that you've *got* to give it to a lawyer — you should always try to go to a lawyer if you can, if it's important enough — but just let a day go by, take a beat and think about it a little bit. You don't have the guy hand it to you and you sign it in front of him; take it and go away, let a beat go by.

One of my favorite stories, I was told, **Harlan Ellison** was giving a talk at a San Diego Convention that had to do with DC and Marvel Comics being grateful that **Neal Adams** was no longer drawing comic books; when Neal stopped drawing comic books DC and Marvel actually breathed a collective sigh of relief. And Harlan said, "But what they hadn't accounted for was the *sons* of **Neal Adams!**" *(Laughter.)*

PAUL: *You helped a lot of guys get in. What I liked about ACBA, you just made them a little smarter or more aware.*

NEAL: More aware. To me, there is a certain amount of disrespect in not counting yourself as being a valuable party. One could say it was history, it was the fact that the Congress attacked comic books and comic books were at such a low ebb, that caused people to have such little respect for themselves that they didn't fight for themselves. But that time was coming to an end. My personal belief is if you've got nothing to fight for, if you're on the bottom rung, just fight for the right to be on the bottom rung. If that's all you've got to fight for, go ahead and fight for it.

The other thing, on the other side of this, is that we're in a business. If the publishers are in business *with* us then it's logical that they present their point of view, and that we try to find some kind of meeting between them. What you want is your publisher to get rich. If *they* get rich that means *you* get rich — you don't want the publishers to get rich by themselves, you want to get rich together.

PAUL: *Yes.*

NEAL: If they're not going to make money then there's no way they're going to let you make money, but if you can make money *together* you can have a good relationship. We should be in association with our publishers. We should understand where they are coming from, and they should understand where we are coming from. But for such a long time it just seemed like the publisher had the only gun in town. Now things have changed.

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

LEE/KIRBY: MANTLO'S RIGHT

Dave Beast –

I was unaware that the **Kirby/Lee** controversy was still going until I read a letter reply in a recent TCJ in which the obnoxious Fanta-person impugned the credibility of **Bill Mantlo** by pointing out that Bill believes that Stan wrote those stories. Gosh, what a radical, off-the-wall opinion!

As you know, I am no **Mantlo** fan, but he has it right. Isn't it amazing how people we certainly never met or heard of "know" so much about who did what at Mighty Marvel? I *do* have a source for free CJ (the only kind I'll read) but it's unreliable, so any you send me will be appreciated.

Ed Hannigan
Westmoreland, NH

APTHORP, KARALEXIS & WELLS: CREDIT DON'T!!

Dear **Mr. Kraft,**

We are pleased to tell you that the illustrations in your recent issue (#89) for the Rocketeer story, were produced for the Disney Company by **Neal Adams'** Continuity Studios. Our graphic art studio in Burbank, Los Angeles. Continuity did bring in **Paul Power** in addition to other staffers to complete the 44-frame project. One error in your caption that you might like to mention is that the "Anthony" mentioned is unknown to us but upwards of seven or eight frames were pencilled by **Mr. Brian Apthorp,** an excellent artist on our staff. The coloring on the work was done in the main by **Ginger Karalexis** with an able assist by our staffer **Jeff Wells.**

These details are generally unimportant to many companies, but at Continuity, we take great pride in the people we work with. It would be a kindness if you would mention, in a future issue, Brian, Ginger, and Jeff.

Kristine Adams
Continuity Graphic Associates, Inc.
62 W. 45th St.
New York, NY 10036

P.S. Most of the frames, of course, including the work on your cover, were done by Neal.

COMICS INTERVIEW GIVES YOU MORE!

Dear Carolyn,

I really enjoy your publication and like the fact that it focuses on more than just the writers, artists, and editors within the industry. Kudos to you, Mr. **David Anthony Kraft,** and all those involved with COMICS INTERVIEW.

Michelangelo Cicerone
17660 Wilhelmine #3
Fraser, MI 48026

KIRBY VERSION OBVIOUSLY SPURIOUS

DAK,

Just got your "care package" yesterday. Unfortunately, I already had all but one of the CJs from other sources I would have been better off getting some of *your* mags. I appreciate it tho! 'Specially 'cause the one I didn't have was the **Kirby** interview issue — which I read immediately (the **Simon** one, too).

Whew!! I suppose we'll soon be seeing the interview with **Dick Ayers, Don Heck, Gene Colan** and **John Buscema** explaining how *they* wrote all the stories they drew, too. And all in the same scientifattin' style, too! And that talented **Kirby,** he goes off to DC and writes in a *completely* different style, one calculated to make him seem like a functional illiterate!

That asshole, **Stan Lee!** Never mind that he put credits for the artists, inkers, letterers, etc. when *no one* else did, or that he heaped praise on "King" **Kirby** and others. The first time I ever heard Jack called a genius, and the next thousand times as well, it was Stan doin' the callin'. Wot an egotist!

I think Jack is confusing his life with '30s and '40s movies. That scene where they're moving the office furniture out and the genius shows up and stops 'em (sure — those repo men always listen to geniuses) and rebuilds the company from scratch — I'm pretty sure I saw that in a **Cagney** movie or some such. And the scene where the woman lifts the car up and saves the baby — I've heard that a million times from lots of people, but *Jolly Jack was there!!* Jeez — did he plant the flag on Jima as well?

Actually, I think **Groth** was cruel to print the interviews. **Simon** was truly *pathetic.* So much for journalistic integrity. And, as I've indicated elsewhere, fools in the "comics press" and fandom are believing it!!!!

One can only say: Argh.

I could go on and on, and considered doing so in a letter to THE JOURNAL, but thot better of it . . .

I just want to direct your attention to the lettercol in COMICS URINAL #137, where the **Kirby** thing is given an airing. Didja see it? Are these fans just plain stupid or what? It's amazing the lengths some of them will go to to accommodate the obviously spurious **Jack Kirby** version. Is hatred of Stan so ingrained? I always worshipped the guy as a fan. The worst is Gary's super-weasely answer to **Steve Parkhouse.** I mean, here's the guy simply *telling* how it was and **Groth** sez he "disagrees" with it. Was he there??? And he has the gall to say **Kirby** was speaking hyperbolically (by the way, one of the biggest criticisms of Stan)!!! *Bullshit!* Clearly and literally **Kirby** is stating that Stan didn't write the stuff!

Say, why don't you try to bag Stan and get him to respond to all this? I dunno if he would tho. Probably just get the usual Stan hype and blather. Too bad — it would be nice to hear about the early days of Marvel from someone who was truly there and who can actually articulate it.

Ed Hannigan
Westmoreland, NH

Thanks for changing your mind about sharing your thoughts, Ed, in the interest of bringing a bit of objectivity to what is obviously a charged emotional issue. As Jack himself said in his interview here in CI: "Stan and I know. Nobody else knows." If Kirby has been deprived of what he feels due credit, the solution is not discrediting Lee of his obvious contributions. I think the letter/transcript from Keith R.A. DeCandido in INTERVIEW #89 pretty well puts the subject in perspective, weighs the facts, and comes to the conclusion that Stan and Jack both *get credit for the (re)creation of Marvel Comics.*

— DAK

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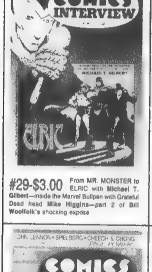

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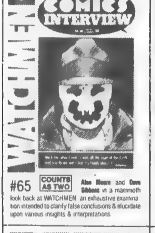

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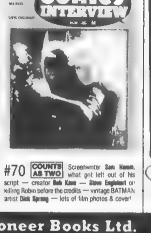

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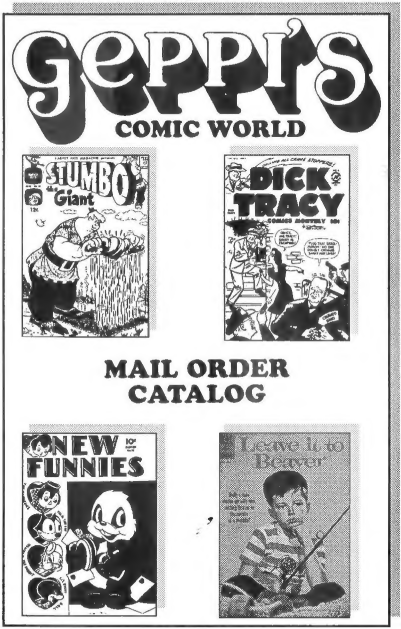

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